



Sorting Nordic Identities

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OBJECTIVE

Scandinavian countries have a unique set of naming patterns that make it especially difficult for family historians to verify correct identities. This class aims to make you aware of common research mistakes in the Nordic countries, teach you how to spot these mistakes in FamilySearch Family Tree, and give you tools that will help you to sort information and correctly identify your ancestor.

You may want to consult the following article before continuing:

Scandinavia Names

COMMON PITFALLS OF NORDIC RESEARCH

People with the Same Name

There are 128 individuals named Maria Andersson living in Gävle's Heliga Trefaldighet Parish in the 1940 Census. Just because a record has the same name, does not mean it is the same person.

The following table includes several common Scandinavian names. For a more comprehensive list, see [Sweden Names](#), [Personal](#) on the FamilySearch Wiki.

Common Male Names		Common Female Names	
Anders	Jens	Johanna	Marie
Johan	Matts	Christina	Stina
Niels	Ole	Sara	Lena
Jorgen	Peder	Maren	Ane

Treating FamilySearch Family Tree as Gospel Truth

Possible Duplicates are POSSIBILITIES and aren't always a duplicate of your ancestor.

- Look at the separate person records side by side before deciding they should be merged.

Record Hints are meant to AID your research, not DO your research. Approach them with caution, not the assumption that they are always right.

- Examine and analyze the records before drawing a conclusion. When possible, look at the image.

APPROACHING RESEARCH AND AVOIDING PITFALLS

Don't get too Comfortable

"Always assume there is at least one other person with the same name as the individual you are searching living in that community. If you do so, you will never automatically attach a piece of data to a specific individual." -Marsha Hoffman Rising

Look for:

- Excessive alternate name, information, and source entries
- Extra spouses and children that don't seem to fit in your ancestor's timeline
- Sources or memories that seem to be about different people with the same or similar names

Start with what you KNOW

Ask Yourself:

- How is this person related to me?
- What do I know about their children, spouse or siblings?
- What records do I have for this individual?

Keep what you know as a reference point to your ancestor, this will help you focus your efforts.

Gather as Many Records as Possible

- Go to the sources page and analyze the sources attached to the individual.
- Where possible, try to locate all censuses/household records and births for children listed on your person in FamilySearch Family Tree.
- Store them in a place where you can easily access them.

Record Storage

You may not be sure certain records belong to your family; you don't want to attach them yet, but how do you keep track of them before you get the chance to add them to FamilySearch? Below are a few helpful ways to save records while sorting identities.

Flash Drive/Computer

Save images to a file on your computer or a flash drive, organize them with file folders, and name or number them so they are easy to find.

- [Step-by-Step Using a USB and U3 Flash Key](#) - FamilySearch Wiki

Pinterest

For information on Pinterest and how to use it for genealogy, see the following articles:

- [Can you use Pinterest for Genealogy?](#) - FamilySearch Blog
- [Just Pin It! The Power of Pinterest for Family History](#) - FamilySearch Blog

Microsoft Word

Copy and paste photos into a Microsoft Word document and type information about the source below the image.

Compile Records in a Way That Makes Them Easy to Analyze

- Standardize the data from each source so you can quickly compare and analyze
- Clearly identify all individuals in the record by name, date, place, or relationship

If you are creating a table, the following is an example of helpful column headings to include:

Record Date	Farm, Parish	County	Name	Spouse	Parents	Children	Record Type

Templates for pedigree charts, family group records, timelines, etc. can be found in the following articles:

- [Genealogy Research Forms](#) – Family Search Wiki
- [Timeline Grids](#) – FamilySearch Wiki

Stay on High Alert for Inconsistencies and Contradictions

Examples include:

- Child born before marriage
- Two children in less than 9 months
- Child born after the death of a parent
- Second marriage before first wife dies/stop having kids

Piece the Story Together, One Piece at a Time

Provide a well-articulated conclusion in FamilySearch Family Tree to prevent further confusion for other researchers. Be honest and detailed about your findings.

Additional Reading

- [Rookie Mistakes](#) - FamilySearch Wiki
- [Solving Tough Research Problems – Overcoming Brick Walls](#) - FamilySearch Wiki
- [How do I undo a merge in Family Tree?](#) - FamilySearch Article
- [How do I fix a merge that has information from Multiple People?](#) - FamilySearch Article

References

Marsha Hoffman Rising, The Family Tree Problem Solver: Tried and True Tactics for Tracing Elusive Ancestors, (Cincinnati: Family Tree Books, 2005), 144.